

(c) whether the security concerns arising from increasing FDI was one of the reasons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Government notified Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy for enhancement of FDI ceiling from 49% to 74% in telecom sector *vide* Press Note No. 5 (2005 series) dated 3.11.2005. The Government has received a number of representations from stakeholders on various aspects of the said policy such as remote access, transfer of accounting information, appointment of resident Indian citizens at key positions of management etc. In view of the above, the Government is reviewing various conditions in the Press Note No. 5 (2005 Series) to enable a sustainable growth in Telecom sector and also the IT sector which is dependent on telecom.

Rural Community Phones

890. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Rural Community Phones (RCPs) provided by the private telecom operators in the country as per the contractual obligation;

(b) the total number of villages where RCPs were to be provided vis-a-vis the actual number of RCPs provided by the Private operators as on the 31st March, 2006;

(c) whether Government have taken stringent measures against the private operators who have violated their contractual obligation;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Reliance Infocomm Limited (RIL) is the only private telecom operator providing Rural Community Phones (RCPs). The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) has entered into an agreement with Reliance Infocomm Limited (RIL) in September, 2004 to provide 21,459 RCPs in

identified villages with population of more than 2000 and where there are no Public Call Offices (PCOs).

(b) As per role-out condition, RIL had to provide 20% of the RCPs by September, 2005 and another 40% by September, 2006. As on 31st March, 2006 the roll-out of RIL comes out to be 8,584 RCPs which is 40% of the total number of RCPs on proportionate basis. As against this proportionate role-out target of 8,584, the number of RCPs provided by RIL as on 31st March, 2006 is 8950.

(c) to (e) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Popularization of HAM radio among youth

891. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of HAM operators trained by the National Institute of Amateur Radio (NIAR), Hyderabad as on 31st March, 2006;

(b) the steps taken by his Ministry to popularize the concept of Amateur Radio (HAM) among the youth in view of its effectiveness and reliability during natural calamities;

(c) whether Government propose to set up Regional Centres of NIAR in different parts of the country; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMED): (a) As per information received from National Institute of Amateur Radio (NIAR), a Non-Government Organization like other Amateur Radio Clubs, 1685 candidates/HAM operators have been trained by them till 31.03.2006.

(b) The Examination and Licensing process for Amateur Radio Operators (HAM) have been simplified. The examinations for Radio Amateurs are conducted periodically all over the country. Various projects for popularizing the HAM activity in the country are taken up by Amateur Radio Clubs, some of which have the support of this Ministry.